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MARKETING ACTIVITIES



U. S. Department of Agriculture
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Hog Selling on a Merit Basis

By M. J. Cook

Top value in hogs sold for slaughter is dependent on conformation and "finish" as well as weight. For that reason the practice of selling hogs on a strict weight schedule does not meet the provisions of the Packers and Stockyards Act which requires that livestock agencies furnish "reasonable selling services" to producers. The Livestock Branch of the Production and Marketing Administration interprets "reasonable selling service" to mean that commission agencies must sell each lot of consigned livestock on its merits under competitive conditions.

Selling individual lots of hogs on their merits instead of selling all hogs within a given weight range at the same price is essential if quality production is to be rewarded with premium prices. It is the intention of the Livestock Branch, through its Packers and Stockyards Division, to assure the producer that his hogs will sell on their merits--and not be priced arbitrarily on weight classification only.

Selling Practices Surveyed at Yards

About two years ago the Division started a special survey of hog marketing at all supervised stockyards to find out whether commission firms were handling hogs in conformity with the selling standards set out in the Packers and Stockyards law. The results showed that scheduled selling, or the selling of hogs with prices based almost solely on weight bracket classifications carefully defined by packer buyers, was being followed exclusively by commission firms operating at a number of markets.

"Schedule selling" might best be explained in the words of a veteran commission man who testified in an administrative hearing in 1942:

"The buyer comes out and tells what he will give us for certain weights, and all you can do is weigh them according to the weights at certain prices. Any school boy can sell hogs nowadays."

Since the adequacy of weight schedule selling had not yet been raised in 1942 this commission man's opinion may be considered both accurate and unbiased. In the testimony which followed he explained that the only possible services commission firm salesmen could perform for producers amounted to efforts to outsort packer buyers at the scales and get inferior, or light, or heavy hogs, into a weight classification carrying more favorable prices. As a result salesmen were discouraged from proper selling practices.

In analyzing schedule selling certain advantages for commission firms, packers, and dealers must be recognized. This system of handling permits the rapid movement of hogs from selling agencies to packers or

dealers, with a minimum expenditure of time and effort on the part of commission firm salesmen, yard men and packer or dealer buyers.

To some extent schedule selling appears also to have certain advantages to stockyard operators for it requires only a minimum utilization of hog pens. Few sales pens are required if hogs received at a public market, instead of being penned, sorted, shown to buyers, and sold in pens, are promptly weighed to buyers under an arrangement whereby the prices are determined at the scales almost solely on the basis of the average weight of the hogs in the different lots.

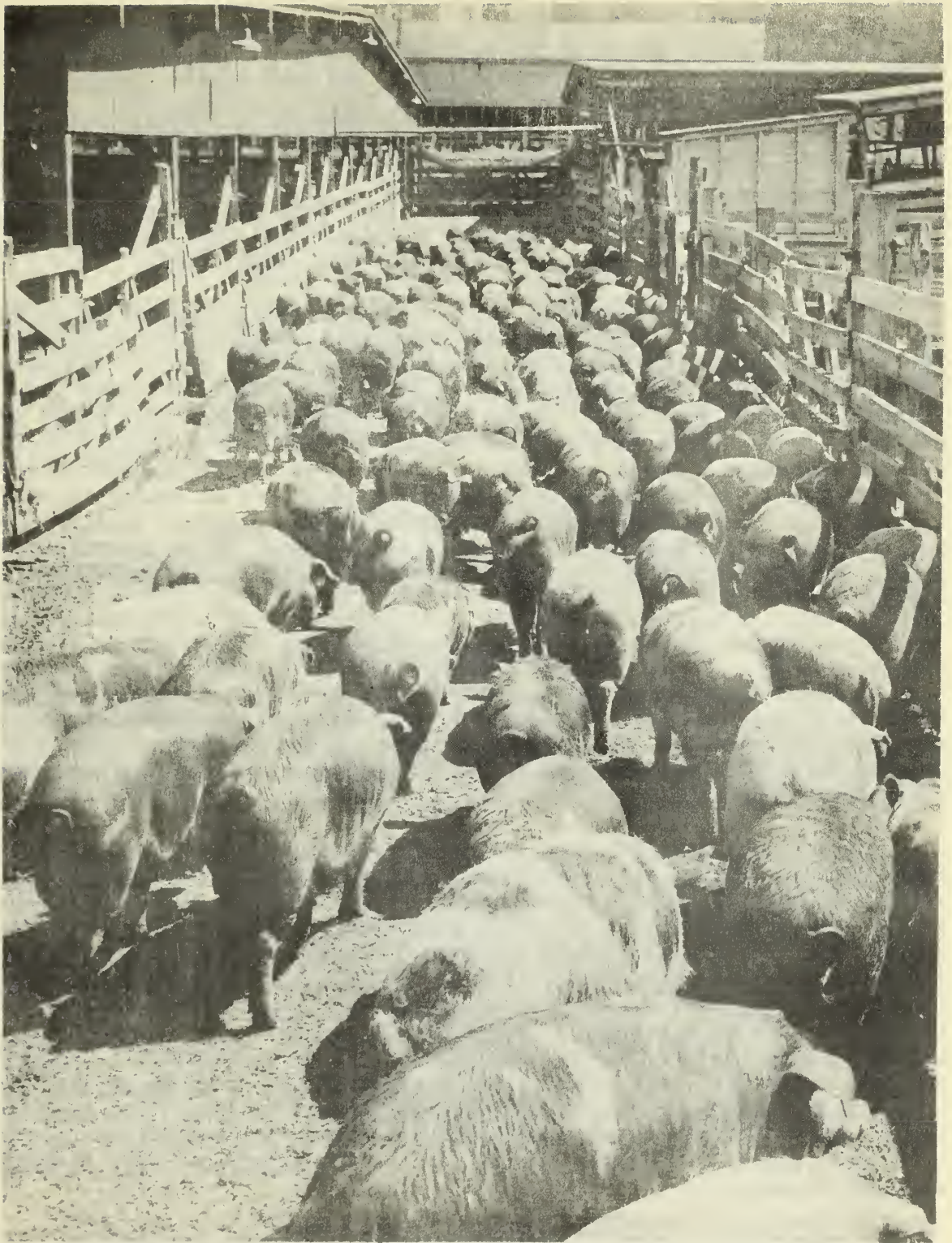
Some supporters of weight schedule selling have maintained that the system benefits all parties involved, including the individual consignor of hogs. Their contention is principally that under weight schedule selling more producers can "top the market." And it is true that under this system nearly any producer can get the "top price" by watching the weight of his hogs.

The fallacy of this situation is explained by the studies of the Division. It holds that whenever hogs are sold and priced entirely under some weight bracket classification the shipper who consigns an above average, or outstanding lot of hogs, gets little, if any recognition in the price he receives. Under schedule selling, if a shipper's lot of hogs falls within a certain weight classification, he receives approximately the same price as the shipper who has consigned mediocre, or inferior hogs, which also fall within the limits of the same weight bracket.

Slaughter Value Dependent on Several Factors

Hogs of different weights, usually barrows and gilts ranging from 180# to 240#, are generally more in demand for slaughter purposes than are lighter or heavier weights. The average weight of hogs in a uniform lot is properly one of the major price determining factors to which hog buyers give consideration in making their bids. However, there are many other factors such as finish, type, and amount of fill which are equally, if not more important than weight in determining actual slaughter values. Impartial tests have indicated that there may be a spread of as much as \$3 per hundredweight in the live value of hogs, which under a weight schedule method of purchasing, would have gone over the scales to packers at the same, or approximately the same, live per cwt. prices. Under schedule selling the premium commission firm salesmen were able to obtain from packer buyers for above average, or outstanding, lots of hogs seldom exceeded 25¢ per cwt.

Under schedule selling by weights, lots of hogs of comparable finish, but varying a few pounds in average weight, have been purchased by packers and dealers with spreads in prices of as much as 50¢ per hundredweight. A few pounds variation in the average weights of lots of hogs of comparable quality could not justify this spread in the prices paid. Although packers seem to attach great significance to average weights in buying hogs, investigations have shown that in connection with their purchases at certain markets, some buyers regularly bought mixed lots of



Hogs of all descriptions are brought in to the Nation's stockyards. It's the intention of the administrators of the Packers and Stockyards Division, Livestock Branch, PMA, "to assure the producer that his hogs will sell on their merits--and not be priced arbitrarily on weight classification only."

hogs ranging in weights from 160# to as much as 300# at top hog prices, from hog speculators who normally put the maximum fill in their hogs before reselling them. At the same markets, the same buyers declined to purchase similar mixed lots of consigned hogs at corresponding prices direct from commission firm salesmen. If packers could afford to purchase mixed lots of hogs, varying in weights from 160# to 300# from speculators at the scheduled price for top hogs, there could have been no real basis for discounting shippers' hogs from 25¢ to 50¢ per cwt., or more, merely because the weights of the producers' lots failed to fit exactly into the weight brackets the packers had established.

There is another feature of weight-schedule selling and buying which may account, to some extent, for its apparent popularity with certain packers and dealers. It is generally recognized that the use of scheduled selling and buying has the tendency to level-off prices or bring about lower quotations for lots of hogs sold at public markets than would be realized if such lots were sold competitively on a merit basis. Many packers purchase a large proportion of the hogs they slaughter direct from producers, either at their slaughtering plants or at country buying stations. In conducting these direct purchases, packers usually pay prices based on differentials they have established below quoted sales prices of hogs handled at public markets located in the same trade territory.

Lots Vary in Slaughter Value

In order to bring about more wide-spread selling according to merit, there is urgent need for appropriate recognition on the part of commission firm hog salesmen and packer buyers that there are factors other than weight, which make certain lots of hogs more valuable for slaughter purposes than other lots.

Although the P&S Division completed its study of hog selling services late in 1947 it was necessary to delay action to establish merit selling of hogs at public markets until early in 1948. Such conditions as the lack of sufficient hog sales pens made impracticable immediate change from schedule selling to pen-to-pen selling on a merit basis. In addition, the study indicated that some selling agencies were not employing hog salesmen who were fully competent to sell hogs on a merit basis. As soon as substantial improvements had been made in these markets they were advised that selling hogs on the weight schedule system did not constitute reasonable selling services, as required by the P&S act, and it must be discontinued. Since that time, registered selling agencies have largely responded well, and hogs have been sorted, shown to buyers, and sold on their merits in the sales pens, at the highest available bids.

In general the results obtained so far have been encouraging. At two stockyards where the practice of selling hogs on weight schedules was most firmly entrenched, the change to merit selling has brought favorable reactions--both as to hog prices and volume of hog receipts. Shippers of lots of hogs, which are above average in quality, are obtaining more recognition of the extra slaughter value in such hogs in the prices they receive than they did under schedule selling.

At other markets the results have not been uniformly so favorable. Selling agencies at certain markets had followed the practice for years of channeling hogs regularly to one or two dominant packers or dealers. Upon the elimination of schedule selling, these markets experienced difficulty in attracting additional hog buyers to their markets. After having received little encouragement for several years in their efforts to buy hogs at these markets, buyers naturally were reluctant to return to what, in the past, had been pretty much "closed markets." Packers and dealers at public markets are subject to certain restrictions in the conduct of their buying operations, but under the Act they also have certain rights--the most important being the right to bid in competition with other buyers on all consignments of livestock offered for sale. In cooperation with stockyard companies, and other market groups, packers and other possible outlets for hogs have been informed that, if they will put buyers on markets lacking adequate buying competition, the maintenance of open market conditions will be assured under which all buyers can buy competitively.

Switch Achieved Cooperatively

Throughout the period of the study the P&S Division had the wholehearted support and cooperation of many leaders in the livestock marketing industry. This cooperation on the part of leaders in the industry made possible, with practically no confusion or misunderstanding, the transition from weight bracket selling of hogs at the scales to merit selling of hogs in the sales pens assigned to commission firms on the date specified. It has been gratifying that since the change was made there have been many converts to merit selling. Some of the strongest proponents of weight schedule selling, particularly among commission men, are now the most vigorous advocates of selling hogs on a merit basis.

There are indications that some dealers and packers, who under schedule selling pretty much dominated the hog divisions at certain markets, are not too happy about the change made in selling methods. The regular channeling to them of the bulk of the hogs received at those markets has been considerably disturbed--they now have to get out and bid openly against other buyers. The only commission man who has voiced disapproval of the change, so far as has been noted, stated his position very frankly. Under schedule selling he stated he normally finished "putting his hogs over the scale" by noon or 1:00 o'clock, whereas under the new system he frequently doesn't finish until after 3:00 o'clock. He admitted, however, that he has noticed quite a few new names among his hog shippers, presumably producers who formerly marketed their hogs through direct channels.

Elimination of schedule selling of hogs represents only one of many actions taken in recent years under authority of the packers and stockyards act to bring about improvement in the services and facilities available to livestock producers patronizing public stockyards. As a part of the regular supervisory work, marketing specialists stationed at the major livestock markets are engaged regularly in observing and studying the methods of selling and buying being used by commission firms, packers, and dealers in their day-to-day market operations for the purpose

of ascertaining whether any unfair, deceptive, or discriminatory practices are being used.

On the basis of information developed by such studies, appropriate corrective action is taken whenever such practices are discovered. In handling rate regulation under the Act, proposed increases in yardage or commission rates are conditioned upon the elimination of existing inadequacies in facilities or services. All supervisory, investigative, and rate regulatory activities the Act authorizes are coordinated in such manner as to accomplish its overall objectives—that is, to assure livestock producers of open competitive markets, reasonably free from unfair trade practices, where they can obtain reasonable stockyard and selling services at rates which are fair and nondiscriminatory.

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U. S. SAVINGS BONDS ARE EXCELLENT FARM RESERVES

The farming business needs stronger farm financial reserves—a backlog comparable to that built up and maintained by other well-managed businesses. The farmer needs a strong reserve to protect his operations and to safeguard himself and his family in such emergencies as drought, flood, crop failure, and outbreaks of livestock and plant diseases. He needs to build up his holdings in U. S. Savings Bonds, in case prices go lower. His business has even greater need than most, because if the farmer loses his farm, he loses his home and his capital as well. Many farm leaders and economists have pointed out the advantage of U. S. Savings Bonds as a safe place for this reserve.

Savings Bonds are backed by the full credit of the United States, the best security in the world. And they grow into more money, or draw interest, at fixed rates. They are readily cashable, too. If prices in general should go down, the owner of Savings Bonds will have new bargaining power to take advantage of new opportunities.

Amounts of Various Farm Products Required To Buy
A \$1,000 Series E Savings Bond at Cost Price of \$750

| | 1932 | | 1939 | | 1949 |
|-----------------------|---------|------|---------|-------|----------|
| | Yearly | | Yearly | | February |
| | Average | | Average | | |
| Hogs, 200 lb..... | 112 | .... | 60 | ..... | 20 |
| Cattle, 1,000 lb..... | 18 | .... | 10 | ..... | 4 |
| Milk, cwt..... | 586 | .... | 446 | ..... | 173 |
| Eggs, cases | 176 | .... | 144 | ..... | 60 |
| Wheat, bu. | 1,964 | .... | 1,085 | ..... | 386 |
| Corn, bu. | 2,374 | .... | 1,321 | ..... | 670 |
| Cotton, bales | 23 | .... | 16 | ..... | 5 |
| Tobacco, lb. | 7,143 | .... | 4,871 | ..... | 1,631 |
| Potatoes, bu. | 1,974 | .... | 1,076 | ..... | 436 |
| Apples, bu. | 1,229 | .... | 1,172 | ..... | 253 |

Because of the possibility that acreage allotments may be proclaimed for next year's wheat crop, there is widespread interest in the applicable legal provisions. This article will answer many of the questions being received by the Production and Marketing Administration relative to acreage allotments for wheat.--
Editor

The Why's And How's Of Wheat Acreage Allotments

By John C. Bagwell

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended--including amendments made by the Agricultural Act of 1948--provides that supplies of wheat may be adjusted when necessary through acreage allotments. Briefly, the adjustment is made as follows: The national acreage allotment required to produce an adequate supply of wheat is determined. The national allotment is then apportioned fairly among States, counties, and individual farms. The plan as a whole tends to prevent the production and marketing of excessive supplies of wheat.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 provides that the national acreage allotment for any crop of wheat be that acreage which will, on the basis of the national average yield of wheat, produce an amount adequate, together with the estimated carryover at the beginning of the marketing year for such crop and imports, make available a supply equal to a normal year's domestic consumption and exports plus 30 percent of such consumption and exports. The national acreage allotment may not, however, be less than 55 million acres.

Marketing Year Defined

"Marketing year," in the case of wheat, means a 12-month period extending from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year. "Normal year's domestic consumption and exports" means the yearly average quantity of wheat consumed in the United States during the preceding 10 marketing years and the average quantity of wheat exported during such years, adjusted for trends in such consumption and exports.

A national acreage allotment for wheat becomes effective when officially "proclaimed" by the Secretary of Agriculture--and the Secretary may proclaim an allotment even though the supply situation is such as not to require the proclamation of a national marketing quota. The national acreage allotment must be proclaimed not later than July 15 for the next crop of wheat.

The national acreage allotment is apportioned equitably among States, counties, and individual farms. The apportionment among States is made on the basis of the acreage seeded for production of wheat during the preceding 10 calendar years, with adjustments for abnormal weather and trends in acreage during the 10-year period. The apportionment of the State acreage among counties is made on the basis of acreage seeded to wheat during the preceding 10 calendar years, with adjustments for abnormal weather and trends in acreage during the 10-year period, and for the promotion of soil conservation practices. The county acreage is apportioned among individual farms on the basis of tillable acres, crop-rotation practices, type of soil, and topography. Not more than 3 percent of the county allotment may be apportioned to farms on which wheat has not been planted during any one of the three marketing years preceding the marketing year in which the allotment is made--except that any farm which received an allotment in 1942 may retain its status as an "old" farm if certain designated war crops were produced thereon during the war emergency years 1945, 1946, and 1947.

Cooperators Eligible For Price Support

In the absence of marketing quotas, failure of producers to comply with allotments established for individual farms involves no penalty other than the loss of price support. By complying, the producer becomes a "cooperator," and, as a cooperator, is eligible for price support.

The Agricultural Act of 1948, as it relates to price support after January 1, 1950, states that "compliance by the producer with acreage allotments, production goals and marketing practices prescribed by the Secretary may be required as a condition of eligibility for price support." The same legislation also provides that the minimum level of price support to cooperators shall be 20 percent above what it otherwise would be--as long as it does not exceed 90 percent of the parity price--if acreage allotments are in effect at the beginning of the planting season.

Acreage allotments are designed to cope with "moderate" surpluses. When surpluses are heavy, marketing quotas may be proclaimed. The subject of wheat marketing quotas--considerably more complex than acreage allotments--will be covered in a subsequent article.

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NEW USDA BULLETIN EXPLAINS AGRICULTURAL PRICE PROGRAMS

"Price Programs of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1949"--Miscellaneous Publication 683--explains in simple language price support, section 32, national school lunch, marketing agreement and order, sugar, consumer subsidy, and supply programs. Copies may be obtained from the Information Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

Technical Research To Back Tobacco Standards

By Frank B. Wilkinson

Tobacco grades, sometimes as difficult to define as they are important, are designated by our system of tobacco standards. The differences and distinctions among some types are so elusive they nearly defy definition--but in general the standards are a reliable yardstick of quality, value, and usefulness in tobacco.

Since value in a particular tobacco is primarily dependent on its fitness for one of many specific uses in the tobacco industry, it is imperative that the efficiency of official tobacco standards be maintained at a high level. This can be accomplished only through research, careful analysis in the laboratory, and the development of a more definite basis for field inspection.

In order that the necessary research can be done with the most modern and efficient equipment available, the Standards and Technical Research Division, Tobacco Branch, United States Department of Agriculture, has been authorized to establish in Washington, D. C., a small but modern tobacco research laboratory.

Objectives Are Interrelated

The direct objectives of this laboratory will be threefold: (1) To develop and standardize, in cooperation with Federal and State agencies, physical means of testing tobacco; (2) to measure and establish interrelations between chemical and physical properties of tobacco and quality as it is commercially recognized; and (3) to incorporate these technical laboratory findings into workable field standards.

This laboratory, when fully equipped, will have facilities for various phases of laboratory research and will consist of three separate units: A tobacco inspection room, a physical testing room, and a room for chemical analysis and other research investigations.

Performing the chemical research will be Dr. Max Phillips, Senior Chemist of the Tobacco Branch, while Mr. Mebane T. Lea, a practical and experienced tobacco man, will conduct the physical research investigations.

The small but complete research facilities will enable the Division to perform a double function of checking against the efficiency and adequacy of the present standards and, at the same time, probe new areas to find a more definite basis for the establishment and application of to-

bacco standards. Tobacco appetites--and the tobacco industry--are constantly changing. The Division will keep an eye on these economic shifts and relate research developments to commercial utilization.

Tobacco is grown commercially in the Western Hemisphere in regions ranging from Canada to Argentina but no plant is more sensitive to soil and weather conditions. Nearly every climate produces its own peculiar type of tobacco with its own character, flavor, aroma, and usefulness. In the United States alone are produced 26 different types of tobacco, each of which are divided into 20 to 100 or more grades. In addition, there are a number of other types of small production which are grouped together as miscellaneous types.

Experience has demonstrated that only certain types or kinds of tobacco can successfully be produced in any given geographical area and frequently the area which will produce the desired kind of tobacco is very limited. After years of experimentation producers are learning what varieties and strains are the most suitable to their location. Accordingly, for each area more efficient cultural practices, methods of harvesting and curing and processing are being developed. Federal, State, and private investigators are adding their contributions to improving the yield and quality. Foremost among these are the scientists of the Tobacco, Medicinal and Special Crops Division of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils and Agricultural Engineering. Close cooperation between this Division and other interested agencies is necessary in order to keep the development of standards in line with the qualities of tobacco produced from the newer strains and cultural methods.

Production Goals Have Dominated Research

Generally these efforts have been directed chiefly toward developing different strains or varieties, new fertilization and cultural practices, and improved methods of combating field diseases and insects. All too frequently the results of these costly, extensive, and well planned experiments have been judged largely on the basis of increased yields. This is due to the fact that there has been no scientific basis for determining or measuring the quality of tobacco.

At present the most reliable index to quality is the Federal grades as established for each type and as applied by practical and experienced tobacco men. But frequently these grades do not adequately reflect important differences which influence the desirability of the finished product for a specific commercial use. Often differences will be very slight and possibly not at all apparent at the time the tobacco is inspected--only to show up readily in the final product. Undesirable flavor or aroma may be apparent only after the tobacco has been aged through different and time-consuming stages of fermentation.

Extensive chemical investigations have been made on tobacco, particularly by Russian and German chemists, and much of these data has been published. These data, generally speaking, throw little light on the components which govern the quality of tobacco as it is commercially recognized. Unfortunately, this is due to the fact that many of the in-

investigators have failed to correlate their findings with the quality of tobacco as it is commercially recognized or with the preference of the average smoker. Various attempts have been made to find methods or means of measuring the physical properties of tobacco but to date no one has developed satisfactory methods of mechanically measuring the various elements and degrees of quality on which the commercial value and usefulness of tobacco are judged, and on which official grades are based.

Because of the speed with which tobacco must be graded commercially, physical measurements and chemical analyses at the auctions have rigid limitations. In time, it is hoped that suitable physical tests and chemical analyses can be developed which will serve as a reliable check on the adequacy of the grades as applied in the field.

North Light a "Must" for Grading

Tobacco inspection as now practiced makes few demands so far as equipment and facilities are concerned but for laboratory purposes there are two essentials--air conditioning and north lighting. These have been carefully provided for in the new inspection room in the Washington Laboratory. Aid conditioning assures constancy in moisture content. Natural north light will vary in intensity but its steady quality will not involve direct sun rays and their deceptive glares. Color is one of the most important factors in the grades in some types, and these particular tobaccos have a flair for looking, and therefore, grading differently under different light. Artificial lighting, for this purpose, has not been accepted by the Division as yet, but experimental use of fluorescent lighting in different degrees of intensity at different wavelengths will be made in the laboratories in an effort to determine its practicability.

In the tobacco inspection room the tobacco will be typed and classified under automatically regulated conditions of humidity and temperature control. Color studies will be made in this room and in cooperation with the Eastern Regional Research Laboratory in order to establish color distinctions of more definite boundaries. In a similar manner, the smoothness, maturity, body or thickness of the tobacco, width, and finish will be determined. The degree of uniformity, elasticity and percent of injury present in a lot of tobacco can be analyzed, and the findings applied against the standards which already have been established.

Physical Tests Closely Controlled

In the completely cork-lined physical testing laboratory air conditioning will be very accurately controlled to provide ideal conditions for making physical tests. Tests of porosity and moisture-holding capacity demand control of air movement as well as of humidity and temperature. "Burn" tests as well as mechanical tests for determining tensile strength will also be made here.

When all the data pertaining to the physical nature of the tobacco have been recorded, the leaves will be pulverized in a "Wiley" mill to convert the leaf tobacco into a handy form for storage and chemical in-

vestigation. Tobacco samples will be stored relatively dry in airtight glass jars, clearly labeled as to type, group, quality, color, and other specific information.

Special Equipment Essential to Chemical Research

The chemical research laboratory is fully outfitted with the essentials of electrical and gas heat, compressed air and vacuum, and fume hood for removal of noxious gases and vapors. Special equipment includes such devices as an electrically heated "muffle" furnace equipped with instruments which control and register temperatures and will be used for the determination of the mineral composition of tobacco. Another essential is an insulated and thermostatically controlled oven which will be used for determination of moisture content and for drying precipitates and extracts isolated from tobacco.

While physical tests and compositional studies of a preliminary nature are now in progress, some of the facilities and equipment has not as yet been completely installed. The range of the work will expand as the laboratories fulfill their purpose in the tobacco industry.

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EASTERN SHORE STRAWBERRIES TO BE FEDERALLY GRADED

Eastern Shore strawberries will be federally graded and inspected this season according to a New Jersey Department of Agriculture release based on a report in the trade papers. The release points out that dealers buying on a market are most interested in promoting this inspection as a means of facilitating movement of produce to their receivers. The New Jersey release further states that it is much easier to sell inspected produce as the trade becomes more quality conscious. The change is being made this year in an effort to compete successfully with strawberries from other sections. Years ago there was inspection at most of the Eastern Shore markets, but during the war years the services were relaxed. Now buyers are paying the cost of inspection for the first year in an effort to get it started again.

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GOOD FOOD BUYS OFFER NUTRIENTS PLUS ENERGY

It isn't always the food with the most energy value that's the best buy for your money, point out Iowa State college nutritionists. High-energy "straight" calorie foods are luxury items in the diet for they furnish the body with little besides fuel, say the nutritionists. Some foods such as white potatoes, whole wheat bread, rolled oats and liver furnish as many as six nutrients in addition to a good supply of calories, while milk inexpensively supplies calcium, protein and riboflavin, in addition to fuel value.

Here is a summary of many of the highlights of the Annual Meeting of the Atlantic States Division of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MARKETING OFFICIALS, held in Washington, D. C., April 25 and 26, 1949. Representatives of 23 State departments of agriculture and bureaus of markets attended.

Marketing in Action

Cropping up again and again in the Atlantic States Division of the National Association of Marketing Officials was the theme that successful marketing is aggressive marketing. From John I. Thompson's welcoming address to Dr. H. L. Stier's final comments on practical marketing research the accent was on action. John I. Thompson is Assistant Administrator for Marketing and Dr. Stier is the newly elected Chairman of the Division and Chief of the Maryland Department of Markets.

The brand of marketing action embraced by the assembly, however, must be one soundly rooted in research as well as practical marketing experience. In his statements on modernizing techniques Mr. Thompson, while pointing out the need for keeping every marketing feature in pace with the great scientific and technological advances of the day, stressed that revisions should be made logically--progressively analyzing each marketing step.

This approach was confirmed by Dr. Roger B. Corbett, agricultural counsel of the National Association of Food Chains, in his review of his "Twenty-five Years' Experience in Farm Marketing." Emphasizing the need for keeping marketing on a sound economic keel, Dr. Corbett pointed out that marketing practices must be adjusted to meet not only the physical marketing conditions and the consumer demands, but also the nature and quality of the particular crop to be marketed. Dr. Corbett said that marketing was a business in which costs as well as grade techniques had to be considered.

Consumer Preferences Discussed

Consumer potentials as well as consumer preferences came in for a good deal of comment in the discussions. Dr. Corbett brought up the issue first by stating that in all markets the consumers could generally be divided into three classes--the 15 percent who buy quality, no matter how high the price; the 70 percent who shop and who are quality and price conscious; and the 15 percent who are absolutely price buyers. In undertaking any new marketing techniques this last 15 percent has to be considered to avoid the problem of pricing the product out of reach of this purchasing segment.

Fain Cesar, Chief, Marketing and Inspection Division of Oklahoma considered an appraisal of the average income of the consumers-to-be-

served an important prerequisite to intelligent marketing. When the consumer's average income is known, Mr. Cesar pointed out, then the marketing services, the price and quality levels can accurately be determined.

Consumer Contacts Studied

Consumer preference and consumer buying potential were given considerable attention in the marketing discussions. As Dr. Corbett and Mr. McCallister pointed out--direct contact with the consumer is being lost as the trend toward self service grows. Moreover, this problem is magnified by the dearth of research at the retail or consumer level, observed by K. J. McCallister of the Marketing Research Branch.

In discussing the newer techniques in retail marketing, such as self-service, Dr. Corbett said: "In this form of marketing, it is important to realize that the housewife herself makes the final decision. As marketing men we can play an important part in her decision, through advertising, and sales promotion programs."

In discussing another new development in marketing--retail market reporting--Mr. K. J. McCallister of the Marketing Research Branch, observed that today the consumer accepts or rejects, or she buys in reduced amounts. This situation, pointed out Mr. McCallister, increases the importance of studies at the retail level. Statistics on amounts purchased, quality studies, and indications of consumer reaction are helpful in adjusting prices and market supply, concluded Mr. McCallister.

The need for increased knowledge at the retail and consumer level has been accentuated by the realization that many retail facilities have not adopted the general marketing advances. Several marketing studies covering the retail and consumer levels were reported. As Leighton G. Foster, Chief of Distribution Research Division, PMA, pointed out, the objective of most of these studies has been to conduct surveys designed to probe immediate marketing problems, rather than to solve marketing problems involving fundamental research.

Mr. Foster said that the policy in many of the projects has been simply to get factual evidence--"of getting pictures of the problems on the screen to get a more general head-scratching among all those concerned with the matter."

Separate Nature of RMA Stressed

"It is the intent of Congress that our marketing problems will be solved," said Dr. Joy, Assistant to the Administrator of PMA, in his discussion of Activities under the RMA. Dr. Joy stressed that Congress was anxious that RMA activities be kept separate and clearly identified. He reported that in committee hearings these suggestions had been recommended: (1) Activities must be coordinated; (2) Results must be reviewed frequently and cooperatively; (3) Agencies must get their heads together in the determination of research needs; (4) Heads of State agencies must submit current and complete outlines of work performed; and (5) In reporting progress, the cooperative nature of the work should be emphasized.

State Projects Outlined

Mr. Harry Westcott, Chief, North Carolina Division of Markets, said that in solving marketing problems his State had followed two general offensives: (1) to exhaust the local outlets first, and (2) to do basis educational work with the retailers themselves.

Similar State approaches were outlined by Mr. Dan J. Baldwin, Chief of the Kentucky Division of Markets, and Mr. Fain Cesar, Chief of the Oklahoma Marketing and Inspection Board. Mr. Baldwin's report pointed up the value of cooperation at the State level. He said that Kentucky's work under the Research and Marketing Act has been generally similar to the program which has been functioning in North Carolina. Mr. Baldwin related that daily market reports--extremely important to Kentucky's broad network of livestock auction markets--was the first service initiated. In working out marketing problems, Mr. Baldwin considered two techniques most important: First, to teach farmers how to grade and pack a quality product, and second, to obtain a report on the condition of the product at the consumer level.

This second point touches on the crux of the services carried on in marketing Oklahoma watermelons. Mr. Cesar pointed out the importance of complete and advance weather reporting to the successful marketing of melons. In Oklahoma this information, together with reports on market conditions, is made available daily to all producers and marketing agencies.

Oklahoma melons are carefully packed and sized, reported Mr. Cesar. When quizzed from the floor about sugar content, Mr. Cesar replied that high sugar content in Oklahoma melons is guaranteed providentially by a "geographic iron belt extending from Canada to Mexico, and Oklahoma is in the very heart of this happy land."

E. V. Coville, of the Virginia Division of Markets, reported on three projects covering poultry and eggs, hay and grain and a fruit tree survey. Under the poultry and egg project the volume of officially graded poultry is increasing. From February 1948 to April 23, 1949, over 5 million pounds were graded with 3 million pounds tagged with the Virginia quality label. The hay and grain project consists of a survey made of the trade in more than 10 counties to determine facts about the volume, quality, demand and market outlets. Under the fruit tree survey, approximately 3,200 growers have been contacted, and information is being compiled by counties. The age and variety of the trees is tabulated along with the acreage and conditions of orchards.

Special Topics Included in Program

Of particular interest to the marketing officials were the six special discussions included for their direct bearing on marketing problems. Among these was a talk by Harry W. Henderson, Information Branch, PMA, in which the importance of the interchange of marketing information was stressed. During this discussion the PMA publication, MARKETING ACTIVITIES was cited by the assembly as the most likely medium for the exchange of both Federal to State and State to State marketing information.

Another of the special backgrounding topics was offered by Dr. Bushrod Allin, of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. In a discussion of recent economic trends, Dr. Allin pointed out that while prices of agricultural commodities were at uneasy levels and the trend was downward there were important economic props now which did not exist in other comparable post-war periods. Foremost among these are the farm programs and plans, the high level of income and personal holdings in securities, bonds and savings. 'It was considered by BAE that these will forestall a greater than 10 percent decline in net farm income during 1949, he reported. Dr. Allin then discussed the proposed farm plan of Secretary of Agriculture, Charles F. Brannan.

New Poultry Grades Being Prepared

Two PMA programs dealing with the establishment of poultry grades and consumer awareness for meat grades were outlined for the assembly. In introducing his discussion on poultry grading problems, Mr. W. D. Termohlen, Director of the Poultry Branch, stated that it has been the Department's experience that bureaucratic standards for grades do not catch on in the poultry industry. The branch has found that industry advisory committees with task force groups made up of industry representatives and staff members of State departments of agriculture and markets, and the colleges, are essential and useful in the formulation of poultry standards. Mr. Termohlen pointed out that two basic problems are involved in establishing poultry standards: Getting the standards established, and then putting them into effect. He stated that the task force sub-committee on which three State marketing officials, Messrs. E. J. Lawless, Pennsylvania Poultry Marketing Specialist, F. W. Risher, Florida Marketing Specialist for Dairy and Poultry Products, and Mr. Cesar are members, has made great progress toward establishing new standards and grades for live and dressed poultry.

George Wahl, PMA Livestock Branch, stated that one of the prime objectives of the branch with regard to their grading programs was "to enlist the housewife's aid in viewing the whole problem of market grades." The Branch's preparations for this approach include an illustrated talk, "How Federal Meat Grades Help you Shop", which was offered to the assembly by Miss Catherine Nawn, of the Livestock Branch. She pointed out that this presentation is intended to provide the housewife with the information required to buy and cook meat with confidence. She emphasized that the inspection stamp of the BAI does not deal with quality--only wholesomeness. "It is the grade stamp of the Livestock Branch which is based on confirmation, fatness and quality--that is, texture and firmness of flesh--which determines quality."

Retailers Are Trained

For those States interested in promoting new and more efficient marketing techniques at the retail level, the illustrated lecture presented by Mr. Arthur E. Browne and Robert Andrews of the Fruit and Vegetable Branch is direct evidence that this work is progressing on a broad scale. Mr. Browne pointed out that his branch is attempting to make clear to the retailers themselves, the critical nature of their

vital part in the marketing channel. As a means of carrying this out the Department has entered into a contract with the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, under which that organization agreed to conduct courses of instruction in produce merchandising for retailers and their employees in cities and towns throughout the United States. In his remarks accompanying the illustrations, Mr. Andrews explained how the course not only helps retailers build more attractive displays, but also to care properly for fresh fruit and vegetables and thus reduce losses and increase sales.

Transportation Trends Reported

William C. Crow, Director of the Marketing Facilities Branch reported that of the recent trends in transportation which affect marketing the most significant are the increasing diversion to trucks of much of the commodity transport originally hauled by rail, and increases in the level of rates. Mr. Crow pointed out that available statistics for a number of large wholesale markets show that 50 percent of fruits and vegetables, 60 percent of eggs, 98 percent of live poultry, 66 percent of cattle, and 70 percent of hogs were being brought in by truck.

Four reasons were cited as major causes for this shift:

1. The 50 percent over-all increase in rate levels during the past 2 1/2 years. It was pointed out that this was from a relatively high base, for as Mr. Crow reported, the index of railroad rates was considerably above the commodities price index between the two world wars.

2. Shippers were seeking to avoid the extra handling, at each end necessary with most rail connections.

3. Truck transportation provides greater speed, for delays enroute are largely eliminated.

4. Truck transportation is flexible. Destination changes can be effected enroute, and contact with new markets and sources of supply can be made readily.

Mr. Crow summarized by stating that transportation inefficiencies raise costs to consumers and cut producers' returns, and he suggested several answers to this pressing agricultural problem. 1. More efficiency must be implanted in railroad operations. 2. Production of many commodities may be shifted closer to markets to get within trucking distance. 3. Trucking operations as a release from higher rates, must be kept free from hampering regulations of routes and rates.

RMA-Extension Work Outlined

Discussing the Extension Marketing Program under RMA, H. M. Dixon, of the Extension Service, USDA, reported that 40 States and territorial extension services are participating in educational projects in marketing under the RMA act. Mr. Dixon said that there are in operation 97 State projects falling under the three following general lines of work:

Improving marketing methods, facilities and equipment; consumer education; and developing new market information and basic data by market areas. In addition, reported Mr. Dixon, a regional project is under way in the New York City as a pilot demonstration in a metropolitan area.

Marketing Agreements and Price Support Programs Discussed

In leading the panel discussion on market agreements and price support programs, Mr. S. R. Smith, Director of the Fruit and Vegetable Branch, emphasized that the Department depends heavily on the advice and cooperation of industry in carrying out the various marketing agreements. Mr. F. F. Hedlund, Assistant Director of the F&V Branch, pointed out that under the system of marketing agreements, at least two-thirds of the producers and one-half of the handlers in a given area must approve the plan before it can be put into effect.

The two other members of the panel were Mr. K. R. Slamp, Director of Pennsylvania's Bureau of Markets, and Chairman of the Atlantic States Division during the past year, and Mr. George Chick, Chief of the Maine Division of Marketing. In discussing marketing agreements, Mr. Slamp pointed out that Pennsylvania is an important producer of potatoes and eggs, and therefore vitally interested in marketing agreements affecting these products. Mr. Chick observed that in Maine the operation of marketing agreements might be improved if they applied only to out-of-State shipments. Mr. Chick further commented on the changes in Federal potato grades to go into effect this season.

Federal-State Relations Reviewed

In initiating the discussion of Federal-State marketing relations W. W. Oley said that one of the most pressing needs is to work out a more uniform procedure with respect to transferring men from State to State. He said that it is imperative that the 17 Eastern States now operating under cooperative inspection and grading agreements with USDA, make their personnel moves through a central agency.

Commenting on these cooperative agreements, Mr. M. W. Baker, Assistant Director of the F&V Branch, pointed out that under our cooperative agreements State agencies are giving more attention to shipping point inspection than to inspection at terminal markets. There is a definite need for more attention to inspection at the terminal points, reported Mr. Baker. In conclusion, he observed that inefficiency at any level or point in the inspection system reflects on the whole service.

Chief of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Service, E. E. Conklin reported that under cooperative agreement, slightly less than a million cars of fresh fruits and vegetables were inspected during the 1947-48 fiscal year--an all time high. Mr. Conklin further observed that the three most important commodities with respect to fresh tonnage were: potatoes, citrus, fruit and apples, in this order. The quantity of fresh citrus fruits in the future is expected to be less, since a greater proportion is being processed. Mr. Conklin reminded the States that continuous inspection in processing plants is now available for use in connection with the U. S. consumer grades.

Under continuous inspection for consumer grades, potatoes, tomatoes, spinach leaves and celery stalks may now be marked with a shield reading "Packed under continuous inspection of the U. S. Department of Agriculture," and showing the proper U. S. grade. Mr. Robert Bier of the Fruit and Vegetable inspection service stated that at the present rate of preparation, all East Coast inspection requirements should be met without any great difficulty.

Mr. Spencer Duncan of New York State, said that one of the problems encountered in inspection service has been the inevitable changes with respect to commodity purchases. In view of this, training programs involving large numbers of personnel have to be modified or at least promoted circumspectly, said Mr. Duncan.

Market News Developments

C. D. Schoolcraft, Chief of the Market News Division, F&V Branch, PMA, observed that there is a great similarity between market news problems in different areas. Pointing out that funds for market news service are somewhat limited, he said that the objective of the Federal program is to provide the national aspects of the service, leaving it up to the States to develop those aspects of a State and local nature. Mr. K. L. Phillips, in charge of market news service in New York State, called attention to the problems connected with joint supervision of market news employees encountered by both Federal and State governments.

Discussing the growth of market news service, L. M. Davis, Chief of the Dairy and Poultry Market News, PMA, USDA, pointed out that 10 years ago there were 8 or 9 offices in the field. Today, including the Federal and State offices, there are 28. Fifteen States are now joined in cooperative agreements, said Mr. Davis, and he considered these cooperative features indispensable in conducting the program.

C. L. McColloch, Livestock Market News Service, Livestock Branch, pointed out that livestock market news has not had the recent expansion of the poultry and egg service, but the tendency is in that direction. Mr. McColloch stated that the relationship between livestock meat markets and poultry and egg markets is becoming more generally recognized and consequently there is a concerted attempt to expand the dissemination of the market news information now available. Often, too much can be asked of market news, cautioned Mr. McColloch, but the program will give producers a basis upon which they can bargain. If the grading among markets is kept uniform, the system can be improved, he observed.

Expansion in Grain Market News

Mr. G. A. Collier of the Grain Market News Service recalled that the Grain and Feed Market News began with simple price quotations and amounts moved. Today producers and marketing men are demanding additional information including trends, shifting demand, sources of supply, direction of movements, world supplies, international influences, agreements affecting markets and similar data.

Market Services Summarized

Although Mr. S. R. Newell, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Marketing, PMA, spoke at many points in the two-day session, some of his remarks seem particularly appropriate for the summary. Mr. Newell has over-all responsibility for the Department's working relations with State departments of agriculture and State bureaus of markets.

Speaking on the subject, "What's New in Marketing Services," S. R. Newell stated that in his opinion the outstanding development for the long pull is a new outlook and an awareness of the significance of marketing services in dealing with agricultural problems. Mr. Newell commented briefly on his 25 year's association with the marketing officials and paid tribute to the late Randall Ethridge, former Chief of the Division of Markets, North Carolina, whose type of service added prestige to every State department of agriculture and to the standing of the organization of marketing officials. Mr. Newell said that the recognition of the need for more and better marketing services has been manifest in the caliber of the men employed by the States for this work in the last two years, and in the broader attitude of the States toward the program. Mr. Newell commented favorably on the recognition among the State groups for the necessity of obtaining harmony with respect to determining objectives in the fields of activity.

Mr. Leighton G. Foster, in introducing a discussion of marketing service projects under the RMA emphasized that it has been the function of his office to assist States set up projects that will come under the scope of the act. Mr. Leo V. Card, of the Marketing Research Branch, PMA, called to the attention of the assembly the fact that results of research must be tied into market service work.

Research Must Pay Off in Application

As final speaker, Dr. Stier reemphasized the importance of a voluntary and dynamic working relationship between persons engaged in the three major aspects of marketing work: research, education and service. Dr. Stier pointed out that in planning marketing projects in his State--Maryland--these three functions are considered in that order. First, get the facts through research; second, develop their practical application through extension education methods, and then put into effect a marketing service program to meet existing needs.

In tying together the highlights of the sessions, Dr. Stier said that one of the most valuable services that can be rendered is assembly of facts and figures reflecting important trends and relationships in marketing farm products. He continued that the data must be put in a form that is understandable and usable, if producers or handlers are to use such information as a basis for improving marketing practices.

In conclusion, Dr. Stier stressed the necessity for sorting out these facts from opinions or conjectures if accurate decisions are to be made by producers and handlers concerned with the problems of when, where and how to market their products. "The accuracy of facts, timeliness of recommendations, and practical rather than theoretical application" he said, "are essential to the success of any State marketing program."

MARKETING BRIEFS:

Cotton.--All 1948-crop loan cotton (including American-Egyptian) that is still under loan on August 1, 1949, will be pooled on that date by the Commodity Credit Corporation for producers' accounts, USDA has announced. The loans mature July 31, 1949. On March 17, loans were outstanding on about 4,400,000 bales of 1949-crop cotton from the 4,400,000 bales of 1948-crop cotton from the 4,865,000 bales placed under loans to that date. Producers may sell their equity in the loan cotton or redeem the cotton from the loan and then sell it on the open market.

Dairy Products.--USDA has announced an additional program to support prices of milk going into manufacturing uses during 1949 at a national average of 90 percent of the parity equivalent price for manufacturing milk, in accordance with the Agricultural Act of 1948. The support operations will be carried out through offers by USDA to purchase nonfat dry milk solids, when necessary. In carrying out any necessary support operations, USDA will offer to buy in any area during 1949, nonfat dry milk solids of U. S. Extra Grade at 12.25 cents per pound for spray type solids and 11 cents for roller type solids for delivery before September 1 and at 12.75 cents for spray and 11.50 cents for roller for delivery on and after September 1.... USDA has recommended that a Federal order be issued to regulate the handling of milk in the Lima, Ohio, milk marketing area. The Federal order, requested by milk producers supplying the Lima market, would establish minimum prices to producers and require handlers to pay producers the minimum prices..... During April and early May, USDA announced amendments to the Federal orders regulating the handling of milk in the following milk-marketing areas: Duluth (Minn.) -Superior (Wis.); Dayton-Springfield (Ohio), Clinton (Iowa), Philadelphia, and Quad Cities (Davenport, Iowa, and Rock Island, Moline, and East Moline, Ill.).

Fats and Oils.--High lauric acid fats and oils and rapeseed oil have been removed from import control by USDA. Specifically, the items thus decontrolled were listed as rapeseed oil, babassu nuts and kernels, babassu nut oil, copra and coconut oil, palm nut kernels, and palm kernel oil.

Fruits and Vegetables.--USDA has recommended adoption of a Federal marketing agreement and order to regulate the handling of California early potatoes. The program, which had been proposed by growers, would cover all the State except two counties included in another marketing agreement and order. It applies only to potatoes harvested and prepared for market between April 1 and July 15 of each year.... Potato shipments for the 1949 season from Virginia and North Carolina will be limited to U. S. No. 1 or better in grade.... The citrus export program was terminated May 7. Under the program, which became effective December 1, 1948, benefit payments of not more than 25 percent of the f.a.s. price were made to U. S. exporters of citrus fruits to encourage exports of fresh and processed citrus fruits and juices to certain European countries eligible to receive aid under the Foreign Assistance Act

of 1948. The program was ended because freezes in California, Arizona, and Texas had reduced the supply.... In April, USDA recommended adoption of industry-proposed amendments to the California-Arizona lemon marketing agreement and order program. The recommended amendments provide that regulations issued for lemons grown in southern California may be different from those issued for lemons grown in central and northern California.... Also in April, USDA announced its acceptance, subject to formal industry approval, of amendments to the Federal marketing agreement and order program that regulates the handling of California-Arizona desert grapefruit. The amendments provide for (1) separate regulations for white and pink grapefruit, and (2) regulation of grapefruit shipments by minimum standards of quality and maturity whenever the seasonal average price of grapefruit exceeds the parity level.

Grains.--As of March 31, 1949, 295,913,497 bushels of 1948-crop corn and 23,270,176 hundredweight of grain sorghums were under Commodity Credit Corporation loans and purchase agreements.... Purchase by CCC of 23,300,000 pounds of flour (542,890 bushels of wheat equivalent) for delivery to Pacific coast ports by May 16 was announced in April. Cumulative purchases of flour between July 1, 1948, and April 21, 1949, were 1,342,970,000 pounds.... Price-support programs recently announced on 1949 crops: Dry edible peas, 60 percent of the comparable parity price on July 1, 1949, beginning of the marketing year; dry edible beans, 80 percent of the parity price as of September 1, 1949; and soybeans grading U. S. No. 2 and containing not more than 14 percent moisture, 90 percent of the comparable price for all soybeans on September 1, 1949.

Livestock.--A supplemental export allocation of 73 million pounds of pork for the April-June quarter of 1949 was announced by USDA in April. About 66 million pounds of this was assigned to the United Kingdom, which was allowed no meat under the original April-June allocation announced March 30. This allocation will permit maintenance of the existing fresh meat ration in the United Kingdom during the period of low domestic production. The remainder of the allocation, about 7 million pounds, is being allotted to other countries whose requirements for pork during this quarter have not been met. All purchases under the allocation will be met through commercial trade channels.

Sugar.--In the three months through March, 1,412,058 short tons, raw value, of sugar were charged against the quotas for all offshore areas, as compared with 1,007,854 tons charged against quotas for this quarter a year earlier.

Tobacco.--Late in April, USDA announced that a series of meetings would be held to help develop a standard policy on placement of inspection services for new flue-cured and Burley tobacco markets, and for additional sales on old tobacco markets. The meetings are planned for Danville, Va.; Durham, Aberdeen, and Wilson, N.C.; Lexington and Hopkinsville, Ky.; Florence, S. C.; Valdosta, Ga.; and Greenville, Tenn. Dates and times of the meetings were to be announced later by State FMA offices. Tobacco growers, warehousemen, farm organization representatives, and others interested in tobacco are invited.

ABOUT MARKETING:

The following addresses and publications, issued recently, may be obtained upon request. To order, check on this page the items desired, detach and mail to the Production and Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

Addresses:

Our All-American Agriculture, by Charles F. Brannan, Secretary of Agriculture, at a Pan-American Week luncheon, Washington, D. C., April 13, 1949. 5 pp. (Processed)

Summary of remarks by Ralph S. Trigg, Administrator of the Production and Marketing Administration and President of the Commodity Credit Corporation, U. S. Department of Agriculture, at the State Conference of County ACP Committeemen, Richmond, Va., April 21, 1949.

Publications:

Price Programs of the United States Department of Agriculture, 1949. (PMA) March 1949. 62 pp. (Printed) (See p. 10 of this issue of Marketing Activities for further description of this publication.)

Costs and Quality of Cotton Ginning in Relation to Method of Harvesting and Type of Ginning Equipment, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, Seasons 1946-47 and 1947-48. (PMA) April 1949. 54 pp. (Processed)

Recommended Specifications for Standard Packages and Packs for Frozen Eggs. (PMA) March 1949. 24 pp. (Processed)

Agricultural Conservation: State Summaries of Practices, 1947. (PMA) March 1949. 51 pp. (Processed)

Comparative Qualities of Lint and Seed for Some Cottons Grown at Florence, S. C., Crop of 1948. (PMA and Clemson Agricultural College cooperating) March 1949. 15 pp. (Processed)

Potato Preferences Among Restaurant and Hotel Buyers. (USDA) MP-682. April 1949. 92 pp. (Printed)

Questions and Answers Concerning the International Wheat Agreement of 1949. (Office of the Secretary) April 1949. 13 pp. (Processed)

Farm Production, Farm Disposition, and Value of Principal Crops, 1947-48, by States. (Bureau of Agricultural Economics) May 1949. 41 pp. (Processed)

Farm Production, Disposition, and Income From Milk, 1947-48. (Bureau of Agricultural Economics) April 1949. 12 pp. (Processed)

Meat Animals—Farm Production and Income, 1947-48. (Bureau of Agricultural Economics) April 1949. 8 pp. (Processed)

